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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001248

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, S/P, IO; NSC FOR MILLARD

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [CE](#) [ECONOMICS](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: GROUP OF LIKE-MINDED COUNTRIES

Classified By: CHARGE DON CAMP; REASONS 1.5 B, D.

1. (C) In meeting with Charge today, Minister Milinda Moragoda provided latest GSL thinking about its proposal for a new grouping of countries with a less hidebound approach to international affairs and trade policy than the NAM and G-77.

He said the PM has assigned a small group of senior foreign service officers (incoming FonSec Goonetilleke and ambassadors in Bangkok, Washington, Geneva, and Brussels) to vet the list of likely countries and individuals to participate in the grouping. Their plan is to start small, with a list of five or six countries, and arrange quiet meetings with PM Wickremasinghe with the other heads of government at the UNGA in September. This is a slower start than originally envisioned, and Moragoda said it was still possible that the group could be announced in September.

2. (C) Moragoda also said that after a discussion with the Norwegian Foreign Minister, the GSL was reassessing whether the group needed to be entirely composed of developing countries. He asked what the USG view would be of including the Dutch. Charge said he would consult Washington, but pointed out that GSL was the convenor of the group.

3. (C) Moragoda also expanded on what we had previously heard about Indian official reaction to the like-minded grouping. He said he had briefed the idea to Foreign Minister Sinha who had commented approvingly on changes in the world and the importance of the international system changing as well. Less than half an hour later, he said, Foreign Secretary Sibal who had not been in the previous discussion raised concern about the idea with his Sri Lankan counterpart we have too many international organizations already. Moragoda said his reaction is that the minister spoke authoritatively, and he would assume Indian approbation unless he were told otherwise by Sinha.
CAMP